

US Coast Guard Life Jacket Summary Rules

- There must be at least one life jacket for each person aboard
- Life jackets must be properly sized for each person aboard
- Children under a certain age are required to wear their life jacket (typically under 13 – see state requirements)
- Participants engaged in certain water sports are required to wear a life jacket (typically skiing and personal watercraft operation – see state requirements)
- Life jackets must be approved by the U.S. Coast Guard in order to meet requirements
- These life jackets must be readily accessible and not in an out-of-reach location or in original packaging
- Any boat 16' and longer (except canoes and kayaks) must carry a throwable PFD
- Throwable devices must be immediately available for use such as in the cockpit or near the helm
- An inflatable life jacket must be properly armed with an unused gas cylinder
- Inflatable life jackets are authorized for use on recreational boats by a person at least 16 years of age